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Ohio Mycological Bulletin No. 8

W. A. Kellerman, Ph.D., Ohio State University,

Columbus, Ohio, August 31, 1903.

LOOKING FORWARD.—The warm rains of late summer and early fall will bring hosts of interesting and curious Mushrooms, and all those who search in the woods and fields for these striking forms of vegetation will doubtless be rewarded with a bountiful harvest. Hoping that the BULLETIN may aid in the study of these plants, I may say that the subscriptions (and donations) so far warrant the promise of a Number each of the remaining months of the growing season. If the members will tell all their interested neighbors and friends the "price 10 cents," and both teachers of nature-study in the grades and teachers of science in the High Schools would take active interest in the matter, perhaps the treasury of the publication company would soon be overflowing, and in

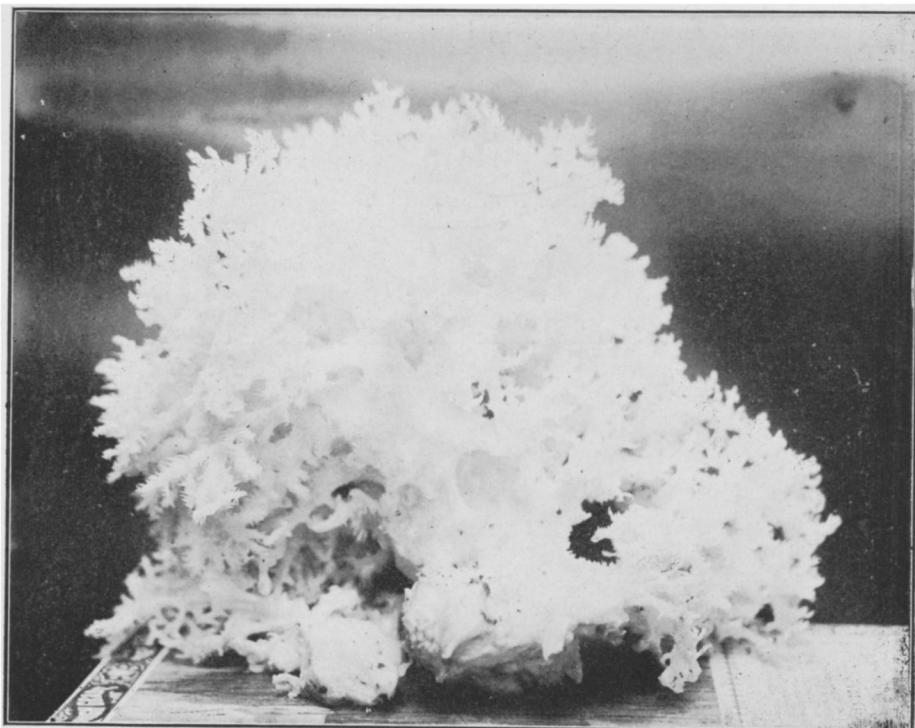


Fig. 35. *Hyd'-num cor-al-loi'-des*. Coral Fungus. Edible. Pure white; growing in woods on rotten logs, etc. Rather common and often quite large. Cut from a photograph taken by T. Otto Williams, Circleville, Ohio.

Entered as Second Class Matter, Post-office at Columbus, O.

that case two Numbers could be issued each month. It will be the aim to figure the commoner, more interesting and striking forms, thus it is hoped rendering much service to beginners and amateurs. Photographs are solicited from members of the Club. These should show the plants natural size, or if the specimens are large the photos should be at least four inches wide in case it is desirable to use them in making cuts for the Bulletin. Thanks are extended for photographs already kindly sent.

THE HYD'-NUMS.—These curious forms are usually abundant in the woods in late summer and fall and their conspicuous spines (always pointed downwards) will reveal their character at once. This is the fruiting (spore-bearing) surface, peculiar to the family Hyd-na'-ce-ae. They are excellent for the table if taken when young and fresh. The striking photo, kindly sent by Mr. T. Otto Williams, teacher of Sciences in the Circleville High School, of the Coral Hedgehog Mushroom has been used in making Fig. No. 35. From the main stem successive branches appear and terminate in graceful shoots; from the under side of these the short spines hang. It can thus be easily distinguished from the Bear's-head Hyd'-num (*H. cap'-ut-ur'-si*) in which the spines are clustered at the ends of the thick branches. Medusa's Head (*Hyd'-num cap-ut-me-du'-sae*), and Satyr's Beard (*Hyd'-num er-i-na'-ce-us*), differ but slightly from the preceding and will doubtless be found by all the Hydnus hunters.

THE OYSTER MUSHROOM.—This name has been given to the Agaric called *Pleu-ro'-tus os-tre-a'-tus*, because "the form of the plant sometimes suggests the outline of an oyster shell." It is a very common edible Mushroom belonging to a white-spored genus [*Pleu-ro'-tus*] of the Agarics, easily recognized by the eccentric or lateral stem; the pi'-le-us, or cap, may in some cases be attached at one side, i. e., more or less shelving, or in some species it may be *re-su'-pi-nate*, that is to say, the upper side lying directly against the wood on which the plant is growing. The species figured in this Number of the Bulletin (Fig. 38) is supposed to be *Pleu-ro'-tus sap'-i-dus*—a form so nearly like the one named above that even so eminent authority as Professor Peck suggests that it may be only a variety of the Oyster Agaric. I think it also may as well be called the "Oyster" Mushroom—because beginners and amateurs, and botanists generally, would not likely separate the two. Specific limits (if there are any here) can also just as safely be ignored by the mycophagists. The spores are tinged with lilac when seen in

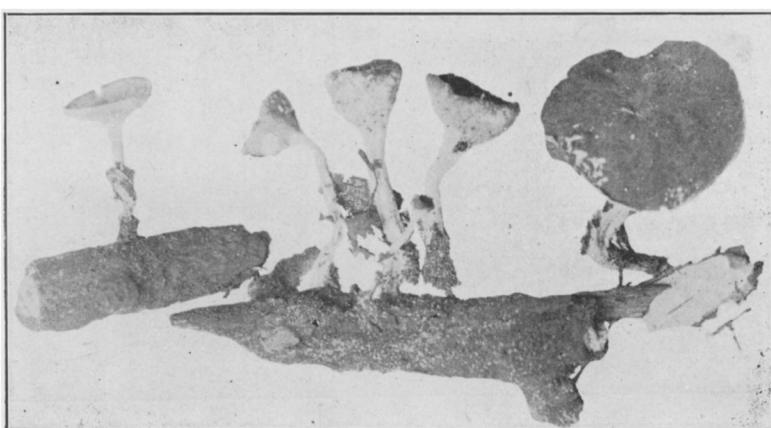


Fig. 36. *Sar-co-scy'-pha oc-ci-den-ta'-le*. Western Peziza. On rotten twigs on the ground. Cup red orange within. Photograph from specimen collected at Sandusky, Ohio.

mass — but the color "seems to be the only distinguishing character and this may not be constant."

One may expect to find in our region also the Elm Pleuro'-tus (*P. ul-ma'-ri-us*), so called because often found growing on the dead branches or trunks, or from wounds in living trees, of the Elm. It is not, however, confined wholly to the Elm. "It is a large species," as Atkinson says, "easily distinguished from the Oyster Agaric and the other related species by its long stem attached usually near the center of the cap, and by the gills being rounded or notched at their inner extremity."

Another interesting Pleurotus is the Petal-like Agaric (*Pleuro'-tus pet-a-loi'-des*), fine specimens of which were found at Columbus in the spring, growing by the sidewalk, apparently from the ground but in reality from rotten wood underground. It grows also on fallen branches and trunks and on stumps. The plant is usually ascending or nearly upright in position, somewhat spatulate in form or broad above and tapering downward into a short stem. The margin is at first turned inward. The color may be white, but is also sometimes pale reddish or brown. A peculiar character serving well to make the identification of this small species quite certain, is the *fuzzy* appearance of the gills when looked at with a pocket lens, or even with sharp eyes. It is due to the presence of numerous enlarged cells of peculiar form, called the *cystid'-i-a*.

PE-ZI-ZA'-CE-AE. — The interesting Pe-zi'-za Family has already been referred to (p. 15) and some figures given. We include in this Number two cuts of charming forms that botanists place in this group. While they are too small to be favorably regarded from the esculent point of view, they could not go unheeded by those who notice the peculiar growths and beautiful colors in nature. These and other species may be found in shady woods that have not been despoiled by the demands of agriculture and other destructive industries of civilization. The brilliant cups of Pezizas Fig. 36 and 37, nestled in bright green moss and delicate fern, might form a center-piece for the dining table that would complement the pleasure of the delicious viands. Their aesthetic use justifies the encroachment we make on the space of the Bulletin pages, though of course half-tones illy show them—expensive colored figures might almost do them justice. The Pezizas retain their shape and bright color equally long, even longer than the best bouquets of flowers—proper moistening or protection from excessive evaporation enhancing their period of usefulness.

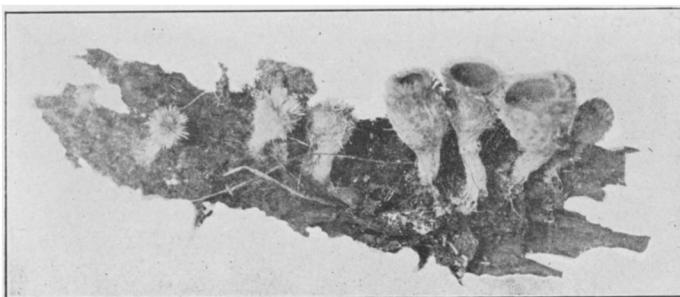


Fig. 37. Sar-co-scy'-pha flocc-o'sa. Floccose Peziza. On rotten branches on the ground. Cup bright red within and surrounded by long, white hairs. Stem and outside of cup whitish. Photograph from specimens collected at Sandusky, Ohio.

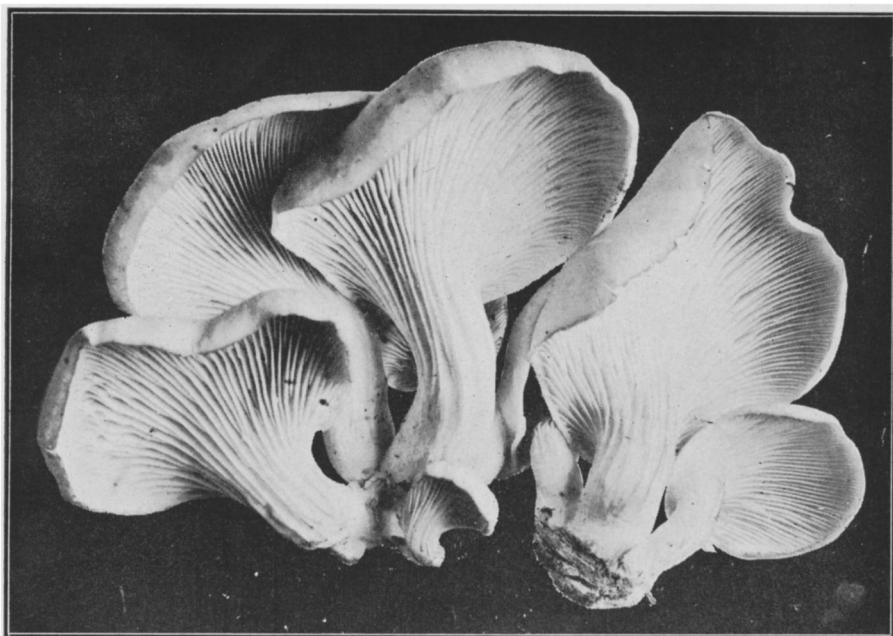


Fig. 38. *Pleurotus sapidus*. Oyster Agaric. Edible. On dead trunks and branches, or dead portions of living trees. White, but the color may vary to yellowish, gray, brownish, or lilac. Spores white or tinged with lilac, as seen in mass when caught on paper. Photo from specimens at Cedar Point (Sandusky), Ohio.

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